



Pastel Sketch of His Wife Made for This Page by Penrhyn Stanlaws.

By Elizabeth Van Benthuisen

THE world, which knows so little about how the man and the woman next door live, has largely missed the remarkable career of the wife who, with success, meets the daily and yearly competition of all of the champion beauties of the day, seeing each come, win the attention of the country for the moment, and then fade, as a morning glory, to give place to a newer and fresher flower.

There are not so many wives who can meet with a serene confidence the competition of one famous beauty. Many a woman who has come along the thorny pathway hand in hand with a man, has seen him taller and fall at the first cross-road that would itself over the pathway. The divorce courts are full of milestones transplanted from the course of true love, and every one of them spelled a story of the possession by the other woman of something that the wife did not have.

Husband of a Beauty Student

Wherefore, one may listen with the closest attention to the story of Mrs. Penrhyn Stanlaws, wife of an artist who has won fame as the maker of womanly types, and who has never felt the sting of competition in the gentle and graceful business of being a successful wife. Hundreds of the most beautiful young women in the country have posed, using every art to bring to the fore their most attractive points, before the man who nestles in the sofa pillows in the Stanlaws' home after it is all done and waits for the companionship of one woman who does not figure in the picture supplements as the ideal of an aesthetic mind.

And does she regard the charming young woman as a possible rival?

Far from it.

The green-eyed monster that comes to so many women who see their husbands merely glance appraisingly at a comely girl in the streets never comes to the woman who knows day by day that her husband looks with critical eye at the best assortment of feminine curves that the artistic world may afford. She doesn't think any more of a posing model, whose face and form will soon regale the exhibition galleries of the magazine readers, than the wife of a wool merchant would regard with disfavor a rare bit of merino that comes along with the samples to show what the spring market will offer.

I talked with Mrs. Stanlaws in her home just after it had been announced that Miss Frances Jordan, mentioned among Mr. Stanlaws' "discoveries" had been picked as the most beautiful woman in the country, with the idea of putting her face on certain governmental advertisements designed to bring to the eye and heart of the soldier an idea of the girl he left behind him, both as a reason for taking governmental insurance, and for fighting for the government.

If this face, picked by a corps of artists as the most beautiful, might be expected to allure in its counterfeit form, the idea presented itself that many beautiful faces and forms, even in their original charm, might offer some submarine danger to the home life of a man who constantly sought the freshness of youth for the making of pictures for the popular pleasing. I wanted to know from Mrs. Stanlaws just how one in the best possible position to know would regard the question that so many idle speculators had asked.

Fascination of the Mysterious.

"People, as a general rule," said Mrs. Stanlaws, wise in her generation, "are much prone to be attracted by the things they do not understand. There is always a vague, uncertain allurements in a land one has not visited. A man who has never been away from America imagines that he will find an Arcadia in some far-off realm of which poets have sung, and whose scenes artists have pictured.

"The chances are that when the man reaches the land he is more interested in studying the time table to find out how soon he can get away than he is in regarding the moss-grown antiquities that lure him thither. Moss on a bucket is about the same in Illinois as it is in Normandy, and just about as exciting.

"To the man who has been in the country before, the situation is different. An artist who has been to the country districts of France to paint knows that he will find a certain old type of broken down mill at a certain place. But he knows also that he will put up with the inconveniences of a tented hotel to get the working chance, and that the procession of peasants who pass before him will only present so many types out of a hundred, just as a procession of natives in Missouri will offer some quaint and unusual studies.

"But the man who knows has no illusions, or delusions. His mind is on straight, and the general effect that meets the casual traveler who has only a vague idea of the country as a whole will not make an impression. He knows what he seeks for the immediate purpose of his visit.

"I do not know of any better way to picture the state of mind of an artist who works among living models. As a rule, he has seen much of the world and knows the classes and the conditions of the women who pose to be painted. And they are as varied as landscapes in an irregular country.

"It is quite possible for a woman to come along who has the most beautiful arm in the world, and yet to find that her mind and her arm have not had simultaneous development. No man ever loved an arm, merely for the arm's sake. He may admire it, but it won't beckon any real man from home unless there is a mental supplement, or complement, that appeals to the imagination of the man. Models come from all walks of life. Some are artistic, graceful and charming girls, who possess the goodness of soul and the polish of society that give added value to their work. There is no danger in such a woman, because she is inherently good, and her work no more involves the duties of a siren than does that of a bank cashier.

Beauty and Lure.

"In some types we find women who have just the simple beauty of youth, with the lack of accomplishment that must exist to make a siren, even though one is desirous of shining in history as a Cleopatra. There isn't any more danger in this type than there is of a man's becoming intoxicated at a prohibition dinner. The alcoholic equation is absolutely missing. There are many of this type, having the physical elements of attraction without the experience and the knowledge of the world that would make them dangerous. They are like wet gun-cotton, which is no more dangerous than putty, although it contains all of the power that, with later treatment, will make it wreck a city.

"If one will study the siren of history, it will at once be impressed that at no time has a woman reached a heart-wrecker's state excepting from the pedestal of political cunning—the same sort of cunning in a woman that lets a man undermine his fellow in plain politics. And the male political wrecker is never of the handsome type. The pure article of beauty has never yet been the vehicle of crime, or of intrigue. Sometimes it has been an accessory to mental development, and sometimes mental development has set beauty at naught and won merely through personality.

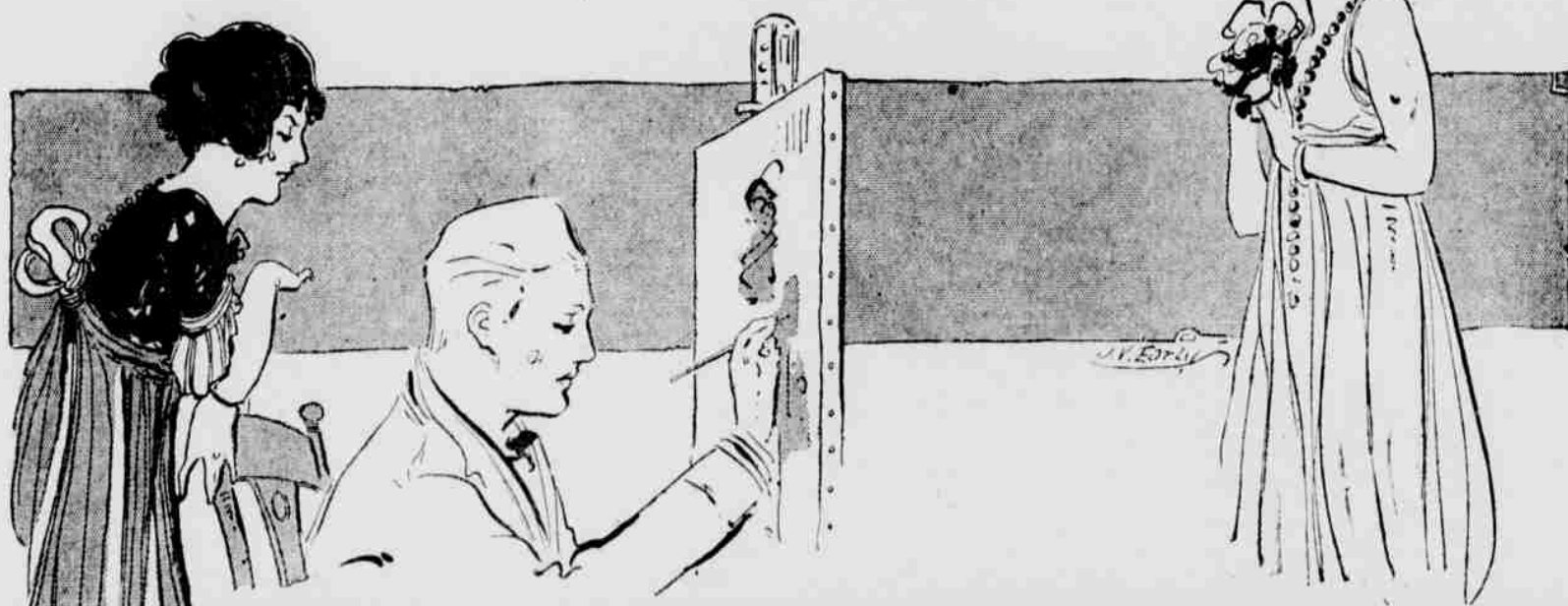
"There is no guile in beauty in itself. Quite the reverse. One must spoil beauty to make evil. It is possible, of course, because the human mind in a beautiful head is, after all, but the same sort of mind that an ugly one contains. It is subject to the same suggestions, the same environment, and the same associations, which combine to make character.

"And, perhaps, the wise wife of an artist, familiar with models, might study them a trifle herself. Does she find a peculiar trick of hairdressing that lends attraction to a face? Why not adopt it? Does she find a drapery that brings out a line? Why not 'try it on your own piano'? The artist's wife has a chance to see all of the things that her husband esteems worthy of art."

I have thus set down the wise comments of a wise woman concerning the things that most women would like to know. And, as I think over them, I am impressed by the fact that the drawing that accompanies this article was made by Mr. Stanlaws of his favorite model—the wife who does not look with envy upon his models of the business hours.

Watching Your Husband Paint the "Most Beautiful Girl"

Mrs. Penrhyn Stanlaws Tells How It Feels to Be the Wife of an Artist Famous for Interpretations of Beauty, and Why She Is Never Jealous at All.



Miss
Frances
Jordan,
"Discovered"
by
Penrhyn
Stanlaws
and
Recently
Selected
as the
"Most
Beautiful
Girl"
for
One of
the
Government's
War Time
Posters.



Newspaper Feature Service, 1918.